

Canada

Facts and Statistics

Location: Northern North America, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean on the east, North Pacific Ocean on the west, and the Arctic Ocean on the north, north of the conterminous US

Capital: Ottawa

Climate: varies from temperate in south to subarctic and arctic in north

Population: 33,212,696 (July 2008 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: British Isles origin 28%, French origin 23%, other European 15%, Amerindian 2%, other, mostly Asian, African, Arab 6%, mixed background 26%

Religions: Roman Catholic 42.6%, Protestant 23.3% (including United Church 9.5%, Anglican 6.8%, Baptist 2.4%, Lutheran 2%), other Christian 4.4%, Muslim 1.9%, other and unspecified 11.8%, none 16% (2001 census)

Government: constitutional monarchy that is also a parliamentary democracy and a federation

» Language in Canada

A multitude of languages are spoken in Canada. According to the 2006 census, English and French are the preferred language ("home language", or language spoken most often in the home) of 67.1% and 21.5% of the population, respectively. English and French are recognized by the Constitution of Canada as "official languages," which means that all laws of the federal government are enacted in both English and French and that federal government services are required to be available in both languages.

The five most widely-spoken non-official languages are Chinese (the home language of 2.6% of Canadians), Punjabi (0.8%), Spanish (0.7%), Italian (0.6%), and Arabic (0.5%).

» Canadian Society and Culture

Cultural Diversity

Canada is culturally diverse. This goes back to the 1890s when it began inviting people from all over the world to settle in the country to help it develop and grow. Canadian immigration policy was historically open, welcoming and egalitarian in its philosophy. This has also manifest into the psyche of the nation where people are encouraged and to retain their cultural identities, traditions, languages and customs.

Individuals concerned with the group

Canadians are generally a tolerant, polite and extremely community-oriented people. Although they are individualistic in terms of their basic cultural traits, they nevertheless place a great deal of emphasis on the individual's responsibility to the community. This is seen as giving balance and a good quality of life.

Regionalism

Most Canadians have a strong allegiance to their province or region, sometimes more so than to the country. There are some broad differences between regions, which can generally be summed up as follows:

- Atlantic Provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland): The people are somewhat reserved and provincial, to the point that they are seen as old-fashioned.
- Ontario: This is the business hub and the people tend to be business-like and conservative.
- Western Canada (Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan): The people are open, friendly and relaxed.
- British Columbia: The people are less conventional. This province is often viewed as the Canada of the future.
- Quebec: The French region, has a distinct cultural identity. The people are extremely regionalistic/independent.
- North: The people have a strong pioneer spirit.

